

City of Minneapolis
Federal Priorities for the
108th Congress, 1st Session

This memorandum outlines areas of Federal government in which the City of Minneapolis has a particular interest or local concern. The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs within the City of Minneapolis welcomes any questions on the on these or other issues pending before Congress.

Thank you for helping to build a better Minnesota.

Sincerely,

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Councilmember Barbara Johnson
Councilmember Natalie Johnson Lee
Councilmember Dean Zimmermann
Councilmember Lisa Goodman

Council President Paul Ostrow
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EMPOWERMENT ZONE

Minneapolis was designated one of fifteen “Round II” Empowerment Zones in 1998. This designation allows Minneapolis to use federal tax incentives to spur investment, creating jobs in our most economically distressed neighborhoods. Also, Round II Empowerment Zones traditionally receive federal appropriations to encourage investment in affordable housing stock, job training programs, small business development, and education. The designation has already resulted in \$18.99 million in direct funding, \$100 million in tax incentives and \$130 million in tax-exempt bonding authority. Minneapolis’ Empowerment Zone is 6.7 square miles, including 49,000 residents and 19 of Minneapolis’ 81 neighborhoods.

Although the legislation that created the Round II Zones called for mandatory spending, federal legislation to create a mandatory program has not materialized and Minneapolis has had to fight every year for discretionary funding for the program.

Federal Funding for the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone

FY 1999	\$3 million	
FY 2000	\$3.6 million	
FY 2001	\$12.3 million	
FY 2002	\$3 million	
FY 2003	\$2 million*	*(in Senate version of the FY03 VA-HUD bill)

For more information about the Minneapolis Empowerment Zone, you may wish to visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/ez/>.

FY 2004 Request: \$5 million for the Minneapolis Empowerment

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MINNESOTA PLANETARIUM & SPACE DISCOVERY CENTER

The new Minneapolis Central Library, opening in 2006, will host the Minnesota Planetarium & Space Discovery Center. The Library and Planetarium will serve as important cultural and educational resources and constitute a major component of ongoing downtown revitalization. The five story domed structure will be a stunning landmark, at Hennepin and Third, visible from the Hennepin Avenue Bridge and Gateway Park.

The Planetarium will be one of the most sophisticated in the country, and for this reason is an excellent candidate for federal funding via the *National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA)* and/or the *Department of Defense*. In partnership with the University of Minnesota, the City would be proud to have the Planetarium's state of the art facility staffed by University experts serving federal defense, research and scientific needs.

Federal funding will be crucial to this \$34 million project because the State of Minnesota was expected to contribute \$30 million to the effort, but the current budgetary climate jeopardizes the likelihood of the City realizing the full \$30 million.

FY 2004 Request: \$4 million to for construction of the Planetarium

VAN WHITE MEMORIAL BOULEVARD

The redevelopment of the Near Northside and Bassett Creek Valley is rapidly taking shape. The first families moving into rental units at Heritage Park in early November was a significant step toward realizing a new mixed-income, high-amenity neighborhood where previously high crime rates, poverty and isolation existed.

While one major focus of the redevelopment project is the construction of mixed-income housing, the plan also calls for major transportation work to connect these isolated communities to economic opportunity in greater Minneapolis. The planned Van White Memorial Boulevard north-south connector will help end the isolation and economic disadvantage experienced by neighborhood residents.

FY 2004 Request: \$10 million to construct the Van White Memorial Boulevard and related site preparation work at Heritage Park

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

The Minneapolis Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is collaboration between the City and Hennepin County to provide appropriate mental health crisis response when police encounter individuals with mental illness. The CIT has played a role in helping police deal more safely and effectively with incidents involving persons with mental illness. Since data collection began in July 2001, officers have assisted 1,780 individuals experiencing a mental health crisis in accessing services.

FY 2004 Request: \$240,000 for the Minneapolis Police Department Crisis Intervention Team

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INFORMATION INTEGRATION PROJECT

The project will allow the City Attorney's Office to enhance its prosecution efforts and, importantly, to integrate with other parts of the Hennepin County criminal justice system and with the statewide integrated criminal database known as "CriMNet". Doing so will allow the City to gather essential data and access reports on nearly 60,000 cases annually, enhancing its prosecution efforts.

FY 2004 Request: \$1.4 million for the City Attorney's Integrated Criminal Justice System

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The development and implementation of a dedicated Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is vital to the City's ability to provide essential services *throughout the metropolitan area* during a disaster—be it natural, accidental, or intentional. An inadequate facility hampers and limits the effectiveness of the command structure; during an incident the coordination between various City departments and federal and State agencies is vital. Situated in an ideal location, the Minneapolis Fire Training Campus would provide a secure operations center with enough room to respond to a major incident affecting the area and meet the training needs required to respond to an incident.

FY 2004 Request: \$6 million to build an Emergency Operations Center that would serve the entire metropolitan area.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Like many other major cities, the Minneapolis Fire Department is required to respond to an accident or health emergency along with an ambulance. The City receives no federal reimbursement for the cost of this response; federal Medicare funding reimburses the ambulance company only. Unlike other cities, Minneapolis does not own or operate its ambulances, and so is not able to defray the cost of the emergency response via federal funds.

FY 2004 Request: The City makes no request for a specific appropriation; rather we ask that you address this shortfall however you see fit, possibly via a supplement to Minneapolis Fire Department's budget.

ENVIRONMENT

AIRPORT NOISE MITIGATION

New Noise Exposure Map: In November 2002, Minneapolis officials met with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to express concern that the drafting and approval of a new Noise Exposure Map (NEM) for Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport based on early 2002 data, which due to the downturn in commercial aviation at that time, is not representative of current noise levels. If such a map is used as the basis for noise mitigation, households that have been promised mitigation under the current contour map but may fall outside the 65 DNL under a NEM will be deprived needed mitigation assistance.

Mitigation to the 60 DNL: The City is also concerned that the Metropolitan Airports Commission honor its commitment to mitigate out to the 60 DNL, made during FAA consideration of the proposal to build the new north-south runway.

FY 2004 Request: Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds set-aside for Minneapolis. Also, the City respectfully requests that the Minnesota Congressional delegation work with the FAA to ensure that any new NEM reflects current noise exposure levels, and that mitigation proceed to the 60 DNL.

PUBLIC HEALTH

COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW (CSO)

CSO's are remnants of the country's early infrastructure. In the past, communities like Minneapolis built sewer systems to collect both storm runoff water and sewage in the same pipe. In the 1930's the two systems were separated, but in periods of rainfall or snowmelt, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewage treatment plant, leading to the occasional discharge of untreated human and industrial waste into local streams, rivers and lakes. In Minneapolis, an overloaded sanitary system causes overflow of untreated sewage into the Mississippi River, and in extreme events causes backup of raw sewage into residents' basements.

FY 2004 Request: \$2 million of a \$9.25 million project to disconnect unauthorized public sector inflow sources that contribute to cause combined sewer overflows

TRANSPORTATION

DOWNTOWN CIRCULATOR / NICOLLET MALL SHUTTLE

The Downtown Circulator is an extension of the Nicollet Mall Shuttle Project, which was previously approved by the Federal Transit Administration. The Downtown Circulator provides a much needed linkage between the Hiawatha LRT stations in downtown Minneapolis, the Third Avenue Distributor garages, the Northstar Commuter Bus Service (and the future Northstar Commuter Rail Line), the Minneapolis Convention Center, and major commuter destinations along the Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis, including the new Central Library project and adjacent mixed-use development.

Recently the City, through Metro Transit, has ordered three high-efficiency/low-pollution hybrid diesel-electric buses for use on the Downtown Circulator. The final component of the project is the construction of a bus terminal as part of a high-density mixed-use transit oriented project near the Downtown Central Library, in which the City has invested \$110 million. The City expects the terminal to leverage over \$100 million in private investment at the nearby mixed use development.

FY 2004 Request: \$2 million to build terminal space below grade for 24 to 30 buses.

TWIN CITIES TRANSITWAYS

The Twin Cities Transitways project will bring economic development to Minneapolis as soon as the Hiawatha line opens. As you know from working in Washington, DC, a city with a terrific transit system, transit is not only economically beneficial but improves the quality of life for riders and reduces pollution.

FY 2004 Request: The City of Minneapolis proudly endorses the Fiscal Year 2004 request of the Metropolitan Transitways Development Board, especially Hiawatha Avenue and the Northstar Corridor.

VAN WHITE MEMORIAL BOULEVARD

The redevelopment of the Near Northside and Bassett Creek Valley is rapidly taking shape. The first families moving into rental units at Heritage Park in early November was a significant step toward realizing a new mixed-income, high-amenity neighborhood where previously high crime rates, poverty and isolation existed.

While one major focus of the redevelopment project is the construction of mixed-income housing, the plan also calls for major transportation work to connect these isolated communities to economic opportunity in greater Minneapolis. The planned Van White Memorial Boulevard north-south connector will help end the isolation and economic disadvantage experienced by neighborhood residents.

FY 2004 Request: \$10 million to construct the Van White Memorial Boulevard and related site preparation work at Heritage Park.

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION

*detailed project information to follow

Twin Cities Transitways

The Twin Cities Transitways project will bring economic development to Minneapolis as soon as the Hiawatha line opens. As you know from working in Washington, DC, a city with a terrific transit system, transit is not only economically beneficial but also improves the quality of life for riders and reduces pollution.

Authorization Request: The City endorses the request of the Metropolitan Transitways Development Board.

Van White Memorial Boulevard

see appropriations section above for details

Authorization Request: Unless fully funded via FY 2004 appropriations, \$10 million to construct the Van White Memorial Boulevard and related site preparation work at Heritage Park.

Above the Falls Trail Loop

This bikeway project has been endorsed by the Trails and Open Space Partnership, the Minnesota DNR, the Trust for Public Land, and the National Park Service. It will connect existing bikeways on the Upper Mississippi, via a trail from Plymouth Avenue to the BNSF bridge.

Authorization Request: \$2 million for construction and acquisition.

PROGRAMS

Although the City of Minneapolis does not seek specific funding for any of the following programs, their contributions are beneficial to the City and its residents. We respectfully request your assistance in defending these programs during these times of tight budgets.

Public Housing Drug Elimination Grant

Community Development Block Grant

COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services)

Brownfields Redevelopment

Aviation Noise Quiet Technology Research

Chicago – Twin Cities High Speed Rail

The City also endorses passage of legislation to authorize the following programs:

A National Housing Trust Fund

Congressman Bernie Sanders and Senator John Kerry introduced legislation last year (H.R.2349/S.1248) to establish the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the Treasury of the United States to provide for the development, rehabilitation, and preservation of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income families. The legislation did not come before either chamber for a vote, but the City of Minneapolis encourages Congress to consider this legislation and other creative ways the federal government can act to alleviate the crisis in affordable housing that is felt in the Twin Cities.

Homeland Security Block Grant

Minneapolis is experiencing escalating budgets for first responders as a result of the call for heightened security. The City calls on Congress to pass a Homeland Security Block Grant act and to appropriate funds to alleviate these funding pressures. We ask that the legislation ensures that the grants are made *directly to local agencies, rather than via block grants to the state.*